

Violence causes Austin to cancel parade

AUSTIN (AP) — Police have canceled Tuesday night's Mardi Gras parade after a police officer and 30 other people were injured in a weekend disturbance downtown.

The decision to pull the plug on the annual downtown parade was announced Monday.

"The protection and safety of the residents of the Austin community prompted this action be taken," a statement released by the Austin

Police Department stated.

The statement also said the department would increase police presence in and around the city's entertainment district on East Sixth Street. Officers will be strictly enforcing the city's alcohol and juvenile curfew ordinances, the statement said.

Youth under age 18 are prohibited from being in the entertainment district without a parent or guardian between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Some partygoers threw

"There were people in the crowd going to Dumpsters in alleys and pulling bottles out and throwing them."

— Halley Cornell
Mardi Gras visitor

beer bottles and smashed windows early Sunday morning after a night of revelry on East Sixth Street. Thirty-five people were arrested. Five people besides the police officer were treated at an Austin hospital.

Police used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse a crowd estimated at about 100,000 people.

"There were people in the crowd going to Dumpsters in alleys and pulling bottles out and throwing them at po-

lice," said Halley Cornell, a Sixth Street visitor from Houston. "Then police started storming toward them and spraying pepper spray. It was a stampede situation."

Late Sunday and early Monday, 13 arrests were reported on Sixth Street. Among the alleged offenses were public intoxication, urinating in public places, tampering with barricades, indecent exposure and attempting to take a weapon from an officer.

Infection may raise heart risk problems

DALLAS (AP) — New research supports scientists' growing suspicion that a variety of common lingering infections may raise the risk of hardening of the arteries.

The study, conducted by Austrian and Italian researchers, is the latest to suggest that diseases of the heart and circulatory system are more common in people with chronic bacterial infections, such as gum disease, sinus infections, bronchitis and urinary tract infections.

The research found that such chronic infections might triple the risk of atherosclerosis, the build-up of clogging deposits in the arteries.

One of the researchers, Dr. Stefan Kiechl of Austria's Innsbruck University Clinic, said the findings may offer clues to how to prevent cardiovascular disease.

Researchers suspect that the body-wide inflammation prompted by these infections somehow triggers the production of plaque in the arteries. However, Kiechl said more studies are needed to show whether antibiotics or anti-inflammatory drugs can slow or stop this process.

The results could explain why some people develop cardiovascular disease even though they do not have the classic risk factors such as high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes or lack of exercise, said Dr. Valentin Fuster of Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City.

Fuster said the findings suggest doctors should be more aggressive about reducing the risk of chronic infection by persuading patients to quit smoking, improve dental health and eat properly.

The study was published in the latest issue of the American Heart Association's journal *Circulation*.

The researchers looked for changes in the carotid arteries — the main blood vessels supplying the brain — of 826 men and women. The volunteers were all white, ranged in age from 40 to 79, and one-third had chronic infections.

After five years, 41 percent of them had new build-ups in their carotid arteries. The risk of this was three times higher in those with chronic infections.

Dallas Zoo euthanizes only hippo

DALLAS (AP) — Papa, believed to be the oldest Nile hippopotamus in captivity at age 53, was euthanized Monday due to age-related illness.

The Dallas Zoo's only hippo had difficulty walking, could not lie down comfortably and had impaired vision, zoo officials said.

Papa, who weighed more than 4,000 pounds, was buried in an off-exhibit area of the zoo. Results of a necropsy will be available in about two weeks.

"The decision to euthanize an animal is never an easy one," said zoo veterinarian Tom Alvarado. "Improvements in animal care and veterinary medicine are making zoo animals today live longer than ever before, forcing many zoos into an area most are unfamiliar with — geriatric medicine."

Zoo director Rich Buickerood said Papa was a favorite for generations of children. The hippo, believed to have been born in captivity, was purchased 45 years ago from a European breeder.

The zoo will not exhibit hippos again until an underwater viewing facility for a herd of hippos is built in about five years as part of the Wilds of Africa display, he said.

Zoo officials said several other hippos in captivity are approaching Papa's age. The Smithsonian National Zoological Park in Washington, D.C., has a 49-year-old hippo and the Topeka Zoological Park in Kansas has a hippo that is 48.

More than 150,000 hippos remain in the wild, where they generally live as long as 40 years, officials said.

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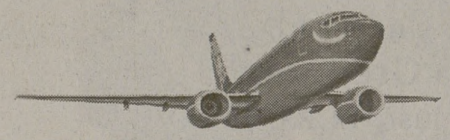
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